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17. ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

The social and physical conditions on Indian reservations were reviewed. The average life span was found to be not more than forty-one years, and a circle of poverty, disease and depression was discovered.

The schooling of Indian children played a critical role in their eventual social and economic disintegration. The lack of initiative on the part of the school and other public agencies in breaking the circle of poverty was partially to blame for the situation of the Indian. The lack of positive response by the children to educational opportunities was judged to be due to their alien culture as reinforced by their home environment. In the schools investigated, 39% of all children in the first grade were Indian; but by the 9th grade this figure had dropped to 3% and by the 10th, 11th and 12th grades no Indian children were enrolled. Teachers related their low achievement and failure with their high absence rates. It was suggested that because of failure, Indian children remained away from school.

The Indians were usually unacquainted with the objectives of the school. They tended to be uncooperative and to lack competitive drives. The effects of a ghetto life, a culture which was deprived in most respects, and the lack of coordinated programs produced much of the misfortune of these Indian children.

Concentrated efforts should be made to bring the 20th century to the Indian reservation. Schools should begin early training of children and mothers, and measures should be taken to end the ghetto reservation.

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INDIANS IN TWO PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEMS

DEPRIVATION AND DISADVANTAGE

Vernon F. Haubrich

The Indian American who is living on a reservation partially as a ward of the Federal Government presents, in many cases, a classic picture of segregated life which is highly deprived and which is legally sanctioned by our society. Adults and children leave the reservation for specific purposes among which are shopping for goods, travel in the immediate area for work and schooling for children.

In both of the communities where beginning studies are being conducted, Indian children attend school with non-Indian children on a fully integrated basis. The schools are off the reservations, except in one case where the Tribe deeded part of its land for a school built by the community. Typically, the child from the reservation is bussed to the neighboring community and then is bussed back after school ends. The situation is not unlike that of several large cities where some children are bussed from one neighborhood to another.

The general economic, social and physical conditions on these reservations are pathetic. The traditions of fishing and minor agricultural pursuits are not sufficient to maintain any adequate standard of living. The homes of the Indians are generally in very poor repair with inadequate facilities for sanitation, heating and water. A state of general depression exists and has existed for a number of years. The etiology of this state of deprivation and disadvantage will be examined later in the paper. Approximately 30% of the Indian families

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are on public welfare and this is six times the rate for the local community.

The health and welfare of the Indian American in the Pacific Northwest and especially in the two communities under study is extraordinarily depressed. The over-riding statistic which blots out all others is the average life span of the Indian. In 1960 the median life span of all Indians was not more than 41 years and in the Pacific Northwest it was not more than 46 years. In essence this means that the Indian child looks forward to approximately 25 fewer years of life than his non-Indian counterpart.

The other statistics follow a dreary trail after this first shocking realization. Indians are hospitalized twice as frequently, Tuberculosis occurs at four times the rate of the whites; infant mortality is triple. One is not reassured by the accurate observation that in the area of health and welfare, conditions have improved in the past 10, 20 or 30 years. All in all, one can say that the circle of poverty, disease and depression has hit home with a vengeance on these people.

The schooling of Indian children plays a critical role in their eventual social and economic disintegration. In no event am I saying that the schools are deliberately creating the conditions of failure and desperation; however, it is in the lack of any clear responsibility for breaking the circle of poverty that the school and other public agencies are partially to blame. If one has a lock-step grade system it is easy to condone failure if children do not meet the "standards"; if one

views children as agents of an alien culture, it is easy to blame the home conditions for lack of response.

The statistics related to school drop outs, to attendance rates, and to percentile rankings on achievement and aptitude tests are telling points when looked at in relationship to the generally impoverished state of the Indian families. It is also important to note that the 1963 statistics presented in this paper have not substantially changed from previous years and that the number of Indian children involved has remained essentially constant.

In community A the Indian children comprised 39% of all children enrolled in the first grade (Indian N = 18). This figure drops to 3% in the 9th grade and there are no Indian children enrolled in grades 10, 11 or 12. By the end of the 4th grade, 65% of the Indian children and 5% of the non-Indian children have failed at least one grade.

In community B the Indian children comprised 33% of all children enrolled in the first grade (Indian N = 34). This figure drops to a low of 3% in the 12th grade. By the end of the 4th grade, 46% of the Indian children and 5% of the non-Indian children have failed at least one grade.

In both communities the decline in enrollment of Indian children is steady and constant with sharp drops in enrollment at the 7th and 9th grade levels. In several other communities preliminary data indicate the same kind of steady drop with few remaining to the end of the 12th grade. It should be noted that the issue of Indian children being in the majority or minority has little to do with the drop-out problem. In one community

where Indian children are in the majority, 95% of the first grade children are Indian and this declines to 11% of the 12th grade.

The number of days absence per year ranges, for Indian children in community A and B, from double the rate to four times the rate of the non-Indian. There is little question that teachers view the low achievement and failure rates as directly related to the disproportionately high absence rates.

Reading tests for both communities indicate that Indian children begin the first grade less able to begin the reading program than non-Indian children. Reading tests given during the first grade indicate a range in percentile scores from the 70th to the 5th percentile for Indian children with a median at the 21st percentile. Non-Indian children range from the 97th to the 45th percentile with a median at the 80th percentile.

In 1960-1 Roger Karrigan, a teacher from a Washington public school district, collected data which substantiates and enlarges upon the data which we are gathering at this time. At that time he found the following:

1. There was a disparity of 24 points in the median IQ scores of the Indian and non-Indian children (84-108).

2. In 1960 over 50% of the Indian children were retained in the first grade of community A.

3. The average daily attendance was 20 days less per year for Indian children as compared to non-Indian children.

4. On tests administered to the 9th grade, verbal reasoning, numerical ability, abstract reasoning, spatial relations, clerical speed, mechanical reasoning and language usage, percentiles indicate that Indian children did not score higher than non-Indian on any test and on only one test did Indian girls score the same in percentile rank as non-Indian girls (spatial relations).

5. On none of the scores did Indian boys score higher than Indian girls.

6. The scores of Indian boys in verbal reasoning, abstract reasoning, mechanical reasoning and sentence usage fell below the 15th percentile. Mechanical reasoning fell at the first percentile.

7. In the first three grades of school 60% of the Indian children failed one grade or more.

8. As the Indian child proceeds through school he falls progressively further behind. The mean grade equivalent difference between Indian and non-Indian children at the 5th grade is .1 of a grade. By the 9th grade this has gone to a difference of 2.7.*

One of the areas in which we are gathering data is the pre-school and early school social and readiness factors related to later school failure. During the summer of 1964 a private agency conducted an integrated pre-school (Indian children predominate; Indian N= 18, total N= 22) class in the school of community A. During this time we were allowed to observe, record notes and data and do extensive interviews with children and the teacher. This material is most valuable when one views the normative data of later school failure and depressed aptitude and intelligence scores. The teacher of the class is a regular nursery school teacher in the city of Seattle and was able to compare her usual classes during the year with the children in this nursery school. Additionally she had four non-Indians in the class.

The following are summaries of her observation records and observations we made on the scene.

1. The Indian children were deficient in listening skills, could not handle group discussion and were deficient in language facility when compared to non-Indian children.

2. Of the 18 Indian children, 17 had no experience with painting, dough play, finger painting, or handling of these materials. The nursery school time was spent

*Kavrigan, Roger. Unpublished M.Ed. thesis. University of Washington. 1961.

learning the rudiments of these materials. The children were unfamiliar with crayons.

3. Approximately 3/4ths of the group of Indian children did not utilize any of the books which were available, either before or after being read to by the teacher.

4. The concept of a daily task was foreign to the children. The notion of each child sharing in the passing of the daily cookies and juice was not understood. By the end of the summer, 1/3 of the children did pass the cookies and juice when asked; 1/3 volunteered to pass and 1/3 did nothing.

5. The concept of a group leader lining up for outdoor play and orderly procedures for exit and entrance was foreign to the Indian children.

6. Eating habits of the Indian children were sporadic; set times for food seemed to be unknown to the Indian child.

7. Many of the Indian children were closely related by marriage and blood and the teacher was viewed as the outsider.

8. The Indian children had a strong sense of independence. They could dress, toilet, wash and care for themselves. Playground activity and disputes were settled by the children, usually without the teacher's intervention.

9. The children gave evidence of strong withdrawal when extensive speech patterns were used by the teacher. The children used very simple phrases when they spoke at all.

10. The idea of "clean-up time" was foreign and the children did not pick up toys, boxes, blocks, etc. This caused the teacher some concern.

11. Transfer was apparently nil; activities taught and apparently "mastered" were not sought out by the children on the following day. The teacher engaged in much repetition and explication of identical activities.

12. The teacher's judgment and ours was that the children would experience great difficulty in their beginning reading program.

13. The Indian children did not have a "questioning syndrome".

14. There was a great deal of solitary play on the part of the Indian children.

15. The teacher's judgment and ours was off by at least one year on the ages of the Indian children, because of their smaller physique and size.

16. The children gave evidence of placing a great value on certain things (they would not remove shoes for rhythms).

17. The Indian children had little "group empathy" for non-Indian children.

18. There was little volunteerism in play or activities on the part of the Indian child.

19. Many items in the room were completely foreign to the Indian child.

20. Some social habits, dunking the cookies for instance, immediately set the Indian child apart from the non-Indian child.

21. Group singing was foreign to the Indian children.

22. There was little of the initiating, organizing and competitive attitude.

It is difficult to summarize the differences that existed between the Indian and non-Indian children. By and large, one had to note the variance between the "things" in the room and the relatively little acquaintance the Indian children had for these things. For example, an easel or clay was a completely foreign object to the Indian children.

There was little of what teachers are prone to call "cooperation" on the part of the Indian children. On one occasion the teacher said to a child who had been somewhat too strong-willed for her,

"<u>You can go and come back when you are ready</u>."

Of course, the child never came back. They have little background in following directions or in the general concept of "a place for every thing and everything in its place."

The lack of competitive drive is, on all counts, a strong element in this particular Indian subculture. Teachers learn early that if an Indian child cannot answer a question in class discussion, in many cases no other child will volunteer for fear of embarassing the first. The entire range of getting, driving, organizing and initiating activities are largely absent from the life of the Indian child before he comes to school.

The alienation syndrome which is caused by the lack of communication between the Indian culture and neighboring white culture, the failure of an industrial competitive society to make an impact on the segregated ghetto of Indian life, the residue of discriminatory attitudes on the part of communities and agencies within these communities, the total withdrawal of most Indian children in school, grade by grade, is one that is predictable and reliable. This syndrome is reinforced by the number of Indian males who abandon their families for long periods of time, causing a further depression to occur.

The effects of a ghetto life, a culture which is different in many but not all respects, the impact of a socio-economic depression and the lack of a coordinated attack on these problems has caused much misery, disease and early death for these unfortunate people. The choices in this situation are, to me, relatively clear. One can continue to do what has been done and live with the situation as best we can - or a concentrated effort can be made to bring these Indians into the 20th century. This case study indicates the impossibility of maintaining both an open, free and competitive society and any form of ghetto life

which shuts people from the larger society.

The costs of this effort will be high; schools must begin early training of children and mothers, radical measures must be taken to end the ghetto of the reservation; teachers must be retrained and equal employment must be enforced. It is almost axiomatic that the lack of effective political power mitigates against the mounting of this necessary full-scale attack. What is required in this situation is a desire to do those things which must be done for the sake of human beings who need our help.